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Intelligence Alert Memorandum: Possible Conflict in the Aegean

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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Office of the Director

4 April 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President
(National Security Affairs)

SUBJECT : Intelligence Alert Memorandum:
Possible Conflict in the Aegean

1. As the attached roundup indicates, Greek-Turkish tension over the Aegean is at a dangerous level.

2. We continue to believe that both governments, in their rational calculations, want to avoid the dangerous and essentially unpredictable situation of large-scale hostilities over this issue. Indeed, we would estimate that the chances are against either side deliberately deciding to initiate war.

3. What is equally important, we think that each government credits the other with a desire to avoid serious conflict over this issue. At the same time, each government is aware of political limitations on the other at home, of the fact that there are some hawks on the other side, and that rational calculations may not always prove controlling.

4. Indeed, there may be some sentiment in Turkey for launching a pre-emptive strike against Greece -- before the Turkish military capability declines too far as a result of Turkey's inability to obtain armaments. We do not think this reasoning prevails in the Turkish government. However, it cannot be entirely discounted as a factor. In any case, the Turks are concerned about Greek reinforcements of certain Aegean Islands, and some days ago made a formal demarche to the signatories of the 1947 Paris Treaty pointing out these violations.

5. Meanwhile, the readiness of both sides to play "chicken," to keep testing each other's resolve -- e.g., by Turkish overflights

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of the islands and Greek shooting at the overflights -- could easily bring them into explosive confrontation in which neither side felt strong enough to back down.

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6. The Intelligence Community is keeping this situation under close review. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] A roundup of Greek forces on the Aegean Islands, requested by the Embassy in Ankara, is being prepared in CIA and DIA. The attached current intelligence roundup gives the highlights of the situation at the moment.

7. This memorandum has been discussed with offices in CIA, DIA, State/INR and NSA, and they are in agreement.

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[REDACTED]
W. E. Colby

Attachment

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Greek, Turkish Actions Foster Likelihood of Serious Incidents

The prospect of a serious incident in the Aegean Sea is growing as Greece and Turkey appear increasingly ready to take risks in backing up their conflicting claims in the area.

Our embassy in Athens was informed by the Greek government that two Turkish aircraft violated Greek airspace yesterday, as another 13 Turkish planes flew a patrol nearby. Greek aircraft in the area were ordered by higher authorities not to engage the Turkish planes. Antiaircraft batteries on the islands opened fire, but did not hit the Turkish planes.

The Turks are said to be planning "strong retaliatory action" to any Greek attempts to intercept Turkish aircraft.

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██████████ recent Turkish flights over the Greek islands in the eastern Aegean were photoreconnaissance missions. ██████████ the flights are likely to continue. The Turks are said to be seeking the locations of Greek military concentrations on the islands in order to retaliate with bombing if the Greeks open fire on Turkish planes.

The Turkish press has stepped up its coverage of the Greek reinforcement of the Aegean islands, and government officials have protested Greek action in fortifying some of them.

The Aegean issue could prove to be a strong rallying point for a new Turkish government because it is a problem that transcends factional differences. 25X6A

An insight into Turkish attitudes toward Greece is provided by ██████████ the reported establishment of an Aegean command. 25X6A

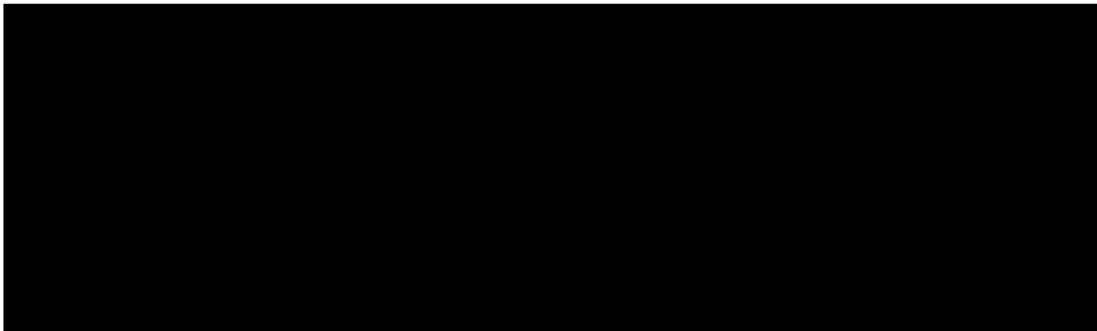
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In addition, an army-level Aegean command has reportedly been set up at Izmir. It would facilitate the rapid movement of troops and improve command and control in the event of a confrontation with Greece.

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